

Public Law 102-31
102d Congress

Joint Resolution

To designate the week of April 15 through 21, 1991, as "National Education First Week".

Apr. 18, 1991
[H.J. Res. 197]

Whereas the economic success and democratic vitality of the United States in the coming millenium depends principally on the Nation's ability to provide a world class education from kindergarten through 12th grade;

Whereas all people of the United States have the right to a fulfilling, free, and safe elementary and secondary education that will enable them to be productive, skilled, and literate citizens;

Whereas the United States today faces an unprecedented education crisis in which students fail to graduate from high school at a rate of 3,000 students a day (or more than 1,000,000 students a year) for the general population, and 46 percent for Black and Hispanic students;

Whereas 26,000,000 people in the United States are functionally illiterate, and only 40 percent of the Nation's students are able to solve math problems requiring 2 or more steps;

Whereas international competitors are outpacing the United States in preparing their students for the 21st century, as evidenced by data indicating that a Japanese student spends 30 percent more time in school than a student in the United States and that Japan has a literacy rate of almost 98 percent;

Whereas the education crisis of the United States places great strains on the Nation's economic, social, and political fabric, as evidenced by data indicating that 80 percent of prisoners are high school dropouts, 77 percent of college graduates (but only 37 percent of individuals with not more than an 8th grade education) voted in the 1988 presidential election, and only 3 percent of the Nation's high school graduates can interpret distinctions among employee benefits plans;

Whereas the Nation's education crisis has reached such damaging proportions that only a coordinated, long-term effort by all sectors of the United States, including business, government, media, labor, and educators, can adequately address the challenge;

Whereas the media, including the television networks, the motion picture studios, and the cable television networks, are powerful tools to influence and arouse the public to a better understanding of the scope and severity of the education crisis, as well as to potential grassroots and legislative solutions to the crisis;

Whereas the commitment of the television networks to promote Education First Week represents the single greatest commitment of broadcast resources in the history of the television medium to address a national problem;

Whereas Education First Week presents a unique opportunity to mobilize national and local political and public awareness through the media and is a significant step in confronting the Nation's education crisis: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the week of April 15 through 21, 1991, is designated as "National Education First Week", and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved April 18, 1991.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 197:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 137 (1991):

Apr. 11, considered and passed House and Senate.